

REMARKS

INTRODUCTION

Claims 1-9 and 11-29 were previously pending and under consideration.

Claim 30 is added herein.

Therefore, claims 1-9 and 11-30 are now pending and under consideration.

Claims 1, 2, 4-9, 11-14, 16-21, 23-25 and 27-29 are rejected.

Claims 3, 15, 22 and 26 are objected to.

Claims 1, 3, 15-18, 22, 23, 26, and 28 are amended herein.

No new matter is being presented, and approval and entry are respectfully requested.

ENTRY OF AMENDMENT UNDER 37 CFR § 1.116

Applicant requests entry of this Rule 116 Response because:

(a) it is believed that the amendment of the claims puts this application into condition for allowance;

(b) the amendments were not earlier presented because the Applicant believed in good faith that the cited prior art did not disclose the present invention as previously claimed;

(c) the amendments of the claims should not entail any further search by the Examiner since no new features are being added or no new issues are being raised; and

(d) the amendments do not significantly alter the scope of the claims and place the application at least into a better form for purposes of appeal. No new features or new issues are being raised.

The Manual of Patent Examining Procedures sets forth in Section 714.12 that "any amendment that would place the case either in condition for allowance or in better form for appeal may be entered." Moreover, Section 714.13 sets forth that "the Proposed Amendment should be given sufficient consideration to determine whether the claims are in condition for

allowance and/or whether the issues on appeal are simplified." The Manual of Patent Examining Procedures further articulates that the reason for any non-entry should be explained expressly in the Advisory Action.

OBJECTED-TO ALLOWABLE CLAIMS NOW IN INDEPENDENT FORM

Claims 3, 15, 22, and 26 are allowable but objected to because they depend from rejected claims. These claims are now in independent form. Withdrawal of the objection is respectfully requested.

REJECTIONS UNDER 35 USC § 103

In the Office Action, at pages 2-11, claims 1-2, 4-9, 11-12, 16-21, 23-25 and 27-29 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Lytle in view of Trenbeath and Harp. This rejection is traversed and reconsideration is requested.

DISPLAY RESPONSIVE TO RECEIVER SELECTING ONE OF RECEIVER'S RECEIVED MESSAGES

Claim 1, for example, recites that "for each receiver the displaying [of the receiver state list] is responsive to the interpersonal message being selected from a received-message list comprising interpersonal messages sent to and received by the receiver". In other words the receiver selects the received interpersonal message from among their own messages, and the receiver state list is displayed in response. An example of a receiver's received-message list would be a receiver's message inbox. The effect is that a receiver has control over display of the receiver state list, and can view the status of other receivers without requiring folder sharing by the sender.

The rejection notes that Lytle and Trenbeath both discuss Microsoft Outlook as an embodying mail program. The rejection concludes that therefore Lytle and Trenbeath are properly combined. The rejection proposes that this leads to a system with e-mail based group voting where message 2300, including a response list, may be displayed by the recipients.

However, in the case of sharing a folder, the receivers themselves do not have the ability

to enable display of the receiver state list. They must rely on the sharing by the original sender of the vote-calling message. In claim 1, the receiver's message is linked to the state list (display of state list responsive to selection of message). A sender and the receivers can share the contents of a message and the progress of a business activity without requiring the awkward procedure of a sender sharing a mail folder and perhaps receivers taking manual steps to acquire the shared folder.

Finally, with Lytle-Trenbeath, the message in the shared folder is selected from among the original sender's message list, not from among a receiver's received-message list, as recited in claims 1, 16-18, and 23.

Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

STATE RELATES TO RECEIVER'S COMPLETION OF ACTIVITY FOR WHICH RECEIVER IS RESPONSIBLE

Claim 1, for example, recites that "each individual state of each receiver indicates a status of that receiver's activity regarding the business activity for which the receiver is responsible". In Lytle-Trenbeath, the receivers simply vote on a topic. The receivers do not indicate whether they have completed the underlying activity being voted on. Using the example in Lytle, it would be unlikely, if not impossible, for any user to have completed a topic or activity (eating a meal at a location) when the topic or activity has not yet been decided upon. Furthermore, a vote is an indication of agreement or disagreement with the voting topic. It is not an indication whether an activity has been completed by the receiver.

Put another way, claim 1 recites a business activity and information related to completion of the same. Lytle-Trenbeath discusses voting on a topic. There is nothing in Lytle-Trenbeath that links the voting topic to activity of a voter. Performing a vote itself is not a business activity because that cause the vote to become a vote on whether to have a vote. The vote in Lytle-Trenbeath must have an underlying topic that separate from the actual activity of voting, and there is no discussion in Lytle-Trenbeath that the vote topic is completion of an activity by a receiver.

Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

CLAIMS 2, 21, 25, AND 30: MANAGER SENDER, STAFF RECEIVERS

Claim 2, for example, recites that "the sender comprises a manager managing the business activity, the receivers comprise respective staff, the interpersonal message is a message inquiring about progress of the staff concerning the business activity, and the manager receives the response messages from the staff, where the responses include completion information indicating whether the business activity has been completed". In Lytle combined with Trenbeath, there is no mention that the sender is a manager, that the receivers are staff, or that the responses indicate whether the staff member's different business activities have been completed.

CLAIMS 7, 9, AND 11: RECEIVER COMMENTS

Claim 11 recites "the message management unit provides a comment section for inputting a comment to the received interpersonal message and causes the comment inputted to the comment section to be displayed as the comment of a corresponding receiver, in the receiver state list". "Comment" generally means "an observation or remark". Lytle clearly does not include this feature. A vote is not a comment or remark. The response list of Lytle includes only a receiver's name, response (vote), and time of response. There is no mention of including a receiver's comment in the response list. Claim 11 is therefore distinct from Lytle-Trenbeath. See also claims 7 and 9, which recite similar features.

Withdrawal of the rejection of claims 7, 9, and 11 is respectfully requested.

DEPENDENT CLAIMS

The other dependent claims are deemed patentable due at least to their dependence from allowable independent claims. These claims are also patentable due to their recitation of independently distinguishing features. For example, claim 29 recites that "the state of activity reflects a recipient's determination that the recipient has completed the activity". This feature is not taught or suggested by the prior art. Withdrawal of the rejection of the dependent claims is respectfully requested.



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CONCLUSION

There being no further outstanding objections or rejections, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. An early action to that effect is courteously solicited.

Finally, if there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

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